

TWO THOUSAND ZERO ZERO

MATURE
READERS

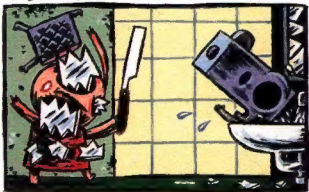
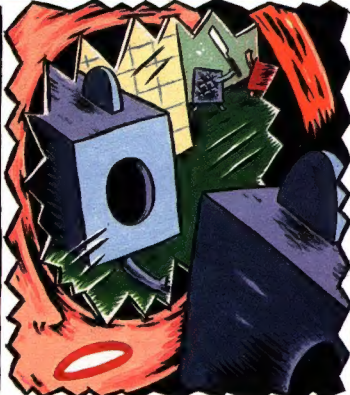
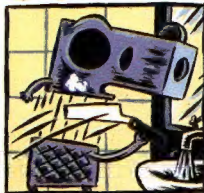
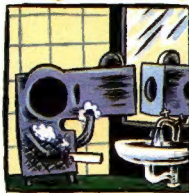
NUMBER 27
FINAL ISSUE !



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS INC.

4.95 U.S.A 7.50 CANADA

JOHNNY GUN & GLORIA



The Search For Smilin' Ed! CONCLUDED.

IT ALL STARTED WHEN A SEEMINGLY CHANCE ENCOUNTER LED WALDO TO THE ABANDONED BUSTER BROWN MUSEUM ON EAST 36TH STREET IN NEW YORK CITY.



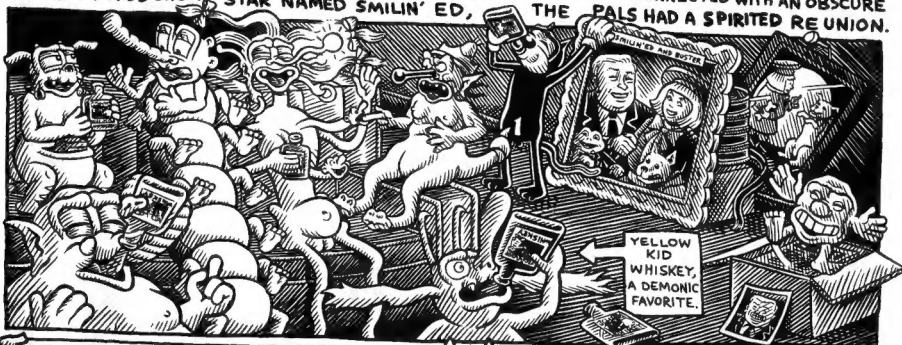
...WHICH WAS THEN BEING HAUNTED BY SOME DEMON PALS OF HIS.



WALDO!
YOU OLD-A
SON OF A
BITCH!

SHOTSY!

AMIDST MUCH MUSEUM MEMORABILIA, INCLUDING MANY ITEMS CONNECTED WITH AN OBSCURE 1950'S TV KID'S SHOW, STAR NAMED SMILIN' ED, THE PALS HAD A SPIRITED RE UNION.

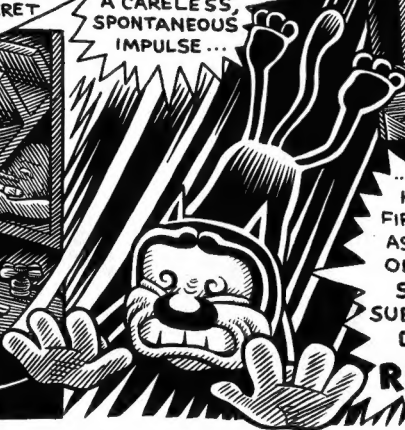


YELLOW
KID
WHISKEY,
A DEMONIC
FAVORITE.

THAT NIGHT, IN WHAT AT FIRST SEEMED A DREAM, HE OBSERVED A GROUP OF LITTLE GREY MEN, HANDING MUSEUM ARTIFACTS THROUGH THE SECRET DOOR OF A MEDICINE CABINET!



THEN
SUDDENLY!
A CARELESS,
SPONTANEOUS
IMPULSE...

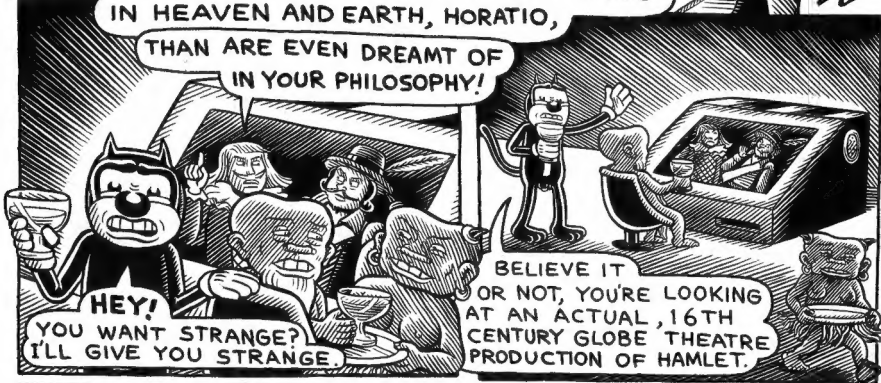


...HURTLES
HIM HEAD
FIRST INTO AN
ASTONISHING
ODYSSEY OF
STRANGE
SUBTERRANEAN
DISCOVERY!

READ ON!...



THERE ARE STRANGER THINGS
IN HEAVEN AND EARTH, HORATIO,
THAN ARE EVEN DREAMT OF
IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY!



HEY!
YOU WANT STRANGE?
I'LL GIVE YOU STRANGE.

BELIEVE IT
OR NOT, YOU'RE LOOKING
AT AN ACTUAL, 16TH
CENTURY GLOBE THEATRE
PRODUCTION OF HAMLET.



WHY, THE GUY PLAYING HORATIO THERE,
IS OLD WILL SHAKESPEARE HIMSELF!

NO KIDDING!

IT WAS
RECORDED ON A LASER STORY
CHIP MADE ON JUNE 8, 1591.

Y'KNOW, IT'S FASCINATING TO COMPARE THE DIFFERENT INTERPERETATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE THAT HAVE BEEN MADE DOWN THROUGH THE AGES.

OVER HERE YOU CAN SEE THE FAMOUS 19TH CENTURY ACTOR, EDWIN BOOTH, DOING THE VERY SAME SCENE!

THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH, HORATIO, THAN ARE DREAMT OF IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY.

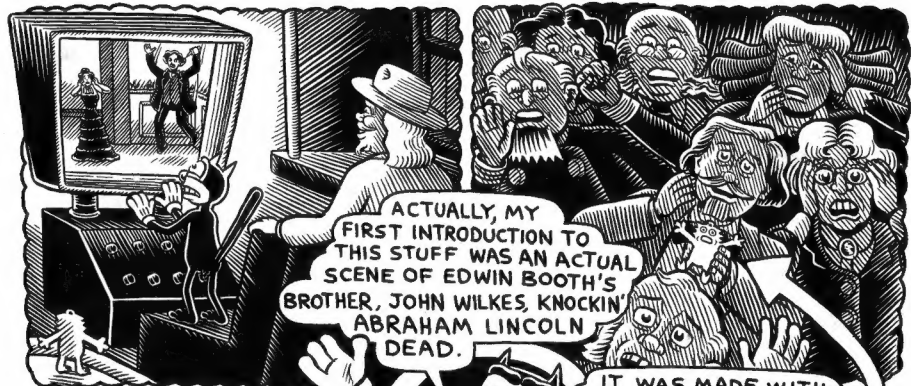
NOTE THE CHANGE IN WORDING. OLD WILL MUST HAVE FINE TUNED THOSE LINES, BEFORE PUBLICATION.

BUT IT'S FUNNY. FOR ALL HIS FAME, EDWIN BOOTH JUST DOESN'T SEEM TO STAND THE TEST OF TIME.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS GUY, PAUL K. DINTENFASS,

...WHO NEVER PERFORMED SHAKESPEARE ANYWHERE, BUT IN MOTHER O'ROURKE'S STATEN ISLAND BOARDING HOUSE, IS STILL KNOCKING 'EM DEAD DOWN HERE.

GO FIGURE!



ACTUALLY, MY FIRST INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUFF WAS AN ACTUAL SCENE OF EDWIN BOOTH'S BROTHER, JOHN WILKES, KNOCKIN' ABRAHAM LINCOLN DEAD.

IT WAS MADE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF SOMEONE WHO HAPPENED TO BE IN FORD'S THEATRE THAT NIGHT.

THE ODD FIGURINE HE HELD OUT WAS ACTUALLY A SMALL, EXTRATERRESTRIAL BEING.



... THAT BEAMED BACK AN IMAGE OF ALL IT SAW TO A SPACE STATION, THIRTY THOUSAND MILES AWAY!

WHERE IT WAS RECORDED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO SEE.

TODAY, THESE RECORDED EAVESDROPPINGS ARE BUT A SMALL PORTION OF THIS MASSIVE UNDERGROUND ARCHIVE,

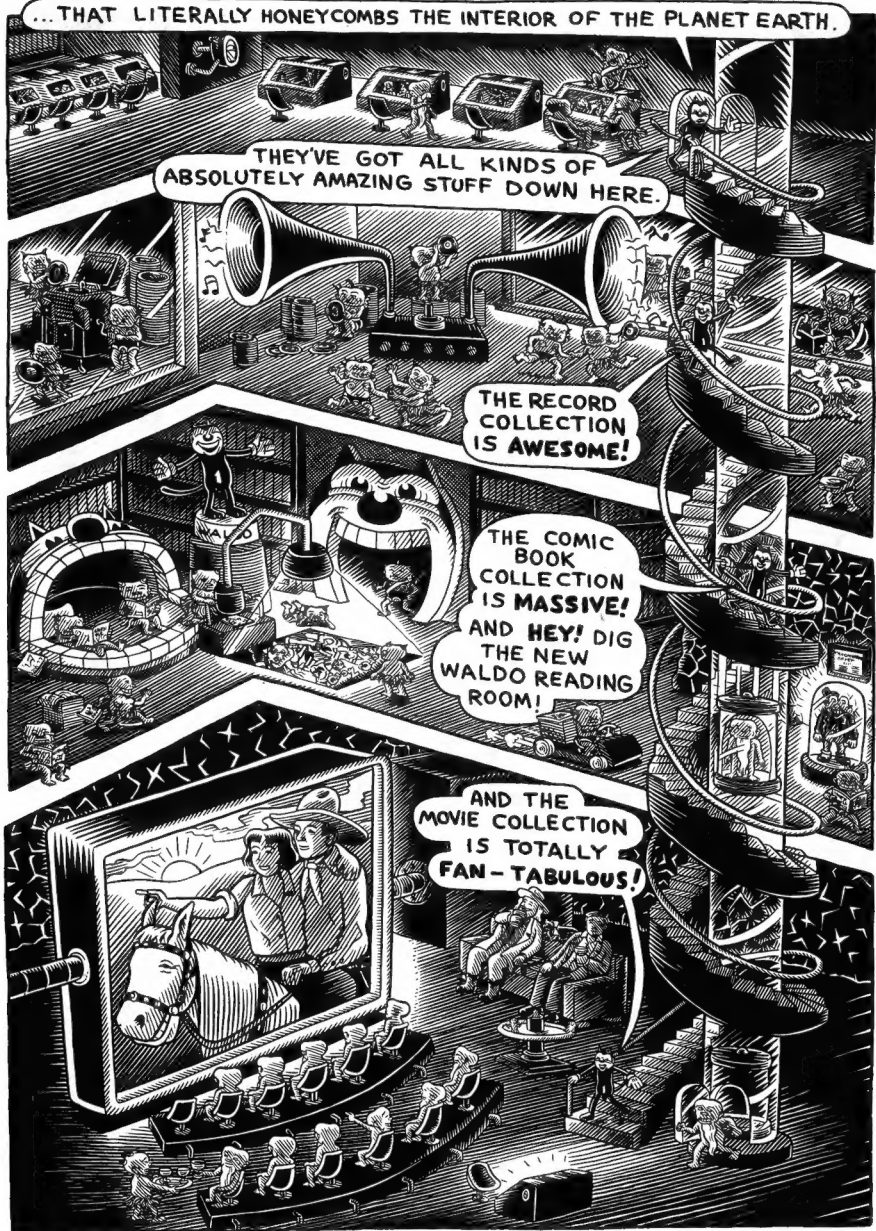
...THAT LITERALLY HONEYCOMBS THE INTERIOR OF THE PLANET EARTH.

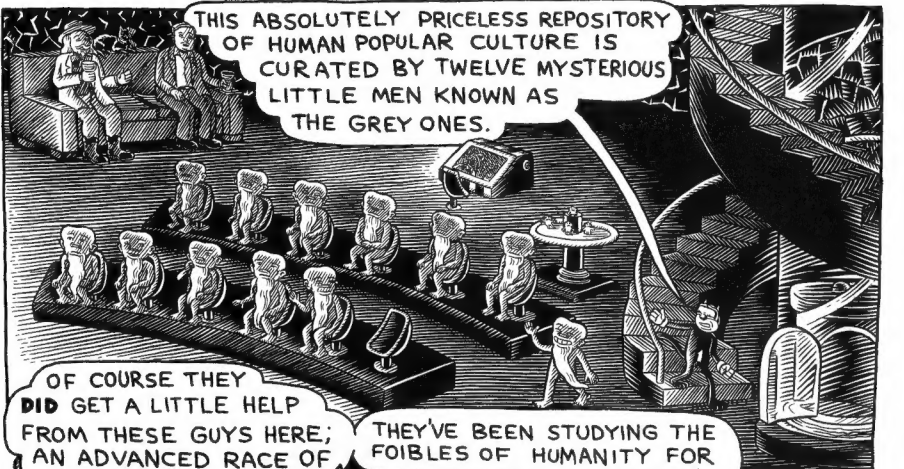
THEY'VE GOT ALL KINDS OF
ABSOLUTELY AMAZING STUFF DOWN HERE.

THE RECORD
COLLECTION
IS AWESOME!

THE COMIC
BOOK
COLLECTION
IS MASSIVE!
AND HEY! DIG
THE NEW
WALDO READING
ROOM!

AND THE
MOVIE COLLECTION
IS TOTALLY
FAN-TABULOUS!






THIS ABSOLUTELY PRICELESS REPOSITORY
OF HUMAN POPULAR CULTURE IS
CURATED BY TWELVE MYSTERIOUS
LITTLE MEN KNOWN AS
THE GREY ONES.

OF COURSE THEY
DID GET A LITTLE HELP
FROM THESE GUYS HERE;
AN ADVANCED RACE OF
EXTRA TERRESTRIALS,

THEY'VE BEEN STUDYING THE
FOIBLES OF HUMANITY FOR
HUNDREDS OF YEARS!



TO THEM THE
REALLY INTERESTING THING
ABOUT HUMANS WAS THAT WHEN
THEY WEREN'T FIGHTING,

THEY DID
SEEM TO HAVE A
PLEASING KNACK FOR
ENTERTAINING EACH OTHER.

THIS INTERESTING HUMAN
SAVING GRACE
SOON BECAME
AN EXTRA-
TERRESTRIAL
OBSESSION.



TO MAKE
A CLOSER
STUDY OF
HUMANITY,
INDIVIDUALS
WERE
ABDUCTED,

INDOCTRINATED,

...AND SENT BACK INTO THE WORLD.

BUT THESE EARLY RECRUITS
HAD A LOT OF TROUBLE
OBSERVING
WITHOUT BEING
OBSERVED.

AND MANY OF THESE HUMAN ACCOMPLICES SUFFERED BADLY.

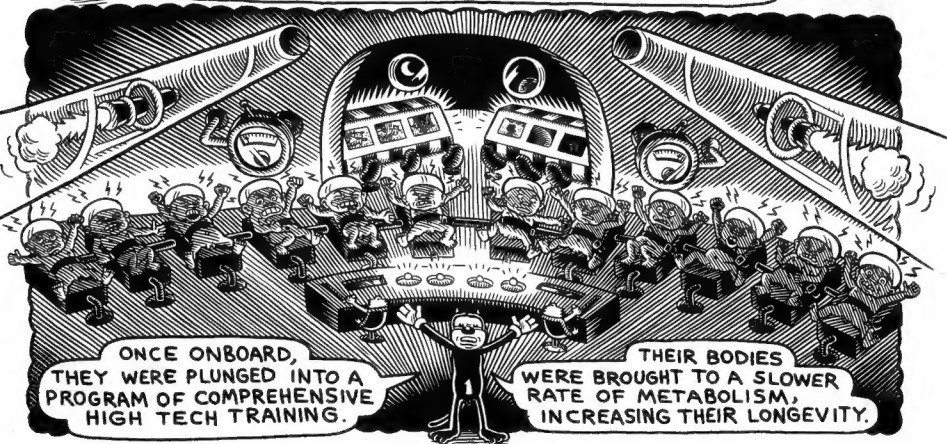


IT WAS HOPED THAT THE
SMALLER SIZE OF THESE GUYS

WOULD MAKE THEM MORE
EFFICIENT SECRET OBSERVERS.



AND SO, SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AGO, A GROUP
OF SIMPLE PYGMY LADS, FROM AN UNCHARTED ISLAND
IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, WERE SUCKED INTO THE SKY.



ONCE ONBOARD,
THEY WERE PLUNGED INTO A
PROGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE
HIGH TECH TRAINING.

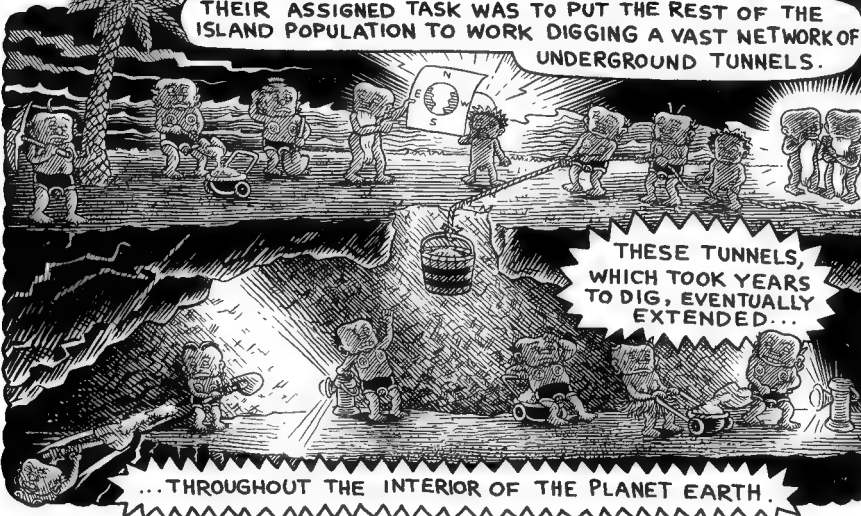
THEIR BODIES
WERE BROUGHT TO A SLOWER
RATE OF METABOLISM,
INCREASING THEIR LONGEVITY.



BUT IT WAS NOTED
EARLY ON THAT
IT WAS AS COLLECTORS
AND COMPILERS
THAT THESE BOYS
REALLY SHINED

SO WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THEIR NATIVE ISLAND,
THIRTY YEARS LATER, IT WAS IN A NEW ROLE,
DESIGNED TO EXPLOIT THIS ABILITY.

THEIR ASSIGNED TASK WAS TO PUT THE REST OF THE
ISLAND POPULATION TO WORK DIGGING A VAST NETWORK OF
UNDERGROUND TUNNELS.



THESE TUNNELS,
WHICH TOOK YEARS
TO DIG, EVENTUALLY
EXTENDED...

...THROUGHOUT THE INTERIOR OF THE PLANET EARTH.

AND WHAT A JOB THESE GUYS DID!

WHEN I GOT MY
FIRST TOUR
DOWN HERE,
I WAS
TOTALLY
FLOORED!

THEY'VE GOT THIS
GREAT REVOLVING
DISPLAY IN THE
UNDERGROUND
COMICS HALL
OF FAME THAT IS
FAN-FUCKING - TASTIC!

COME ON, THERE'S MORE
IN HERE!

BUT WHAT I SAW NEXT REALLY
PUT ME OVER THE TOP!

HEY! WHAT'S
GOING ON HERE!

I'VE
SEEN ALL
OF THIS
STUFF
BEFORE!

HEY YOU! NO TOUCHIN'!

SMILIN' ED AND BUSTER

DE
ONE!

TREASURES
OF THE
BUSTER
BROWN
MUSEUM

SHOTSYS!

**HEY! YOU
SONOFA
BITCH!**

**NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG. I
WAS GLAD TO SEE OLD SHOTSYS!**

**BUT I WAS ALSO KIND OF
CURIOUS AS TO HOW THEY
GOT ALL THAT STUFF FROM
EAST 36TH STREET
INSTALLED DOWN
HERE SO DAMN FAST!**

**OH, THEY CLOSE-A THAT
PLACE DOWN. IT'S-A
TH' ALBANIAN
EMBASSY NOW!**

**ARMENIAN! YOU
BLOCK HEAD!**

LOOK! I SHOW YOU! IT'S-A RIGHT HERE IN-A THIS COMIC BOOK!

**LATER I HEARD
THAT THE ARMENIAN
EMBASSY MOVED
IN THERE.
AND RECENTLY I
HARRIED, FINALLY,
TO GET THE
PLACE.**

**WHAT HE SHOWED ME
WAS A PICTURE OF
KIM DEITCH BEING THROWN
OUT OF THE ARMENIAN EMBASSY.
MILDLY AMUSING...**

ZeroZero!

... BUT I WASN'T ENTIRELY SURE WHAT IT WAS SUPPOSED TO PROVE.

THEN DOC LEDICKER SAID ...

IT'S QUITE TRUE. THAT BUILDING ON EAST 36TH STREET HAS BEEN THE ARMENIAN EMBASSY FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW.



I MIGHT HAVE ARGUED THE POINT, BUT SEVERAL PAGES LATER, IN THE SAME COMIC BOOK, I RAN INTO SOMETHING REALLY STRANGE!



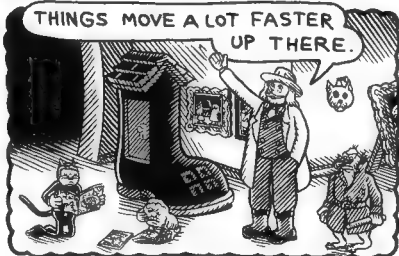
LOOK! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT, BUT THIS SCENE WITH ME TOOK PLACE IN NEW YORK CITY ONLY YESTERDAY!



PERHAPS, BY THE RECKONING OF THE WORLD ABOVE; BUT YOU SEE,



THINGS MOVE A LOT FASTER UP THERE.



THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING IN WHAT DOC SAID, BECAUSE ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE STRANGE COMICS SHOWED MY ARRIVAL DOWN HERE, WHICH BY MY RECKONING HAD HAPPENED EARLIER THAT VERY SAME DAY!

THEN
BINGO!

SAY! WHERE DID YOU GET THIS STUFF?

HEY! EASY DOES IT,
OLD TIMER!

...WE HADN'T REALLY INTENDED FOR YOU TO SEE THOSE COMICS JUST YET;
BUT NO MATTER.

I THINK WE CAN CLEAR
ALL OF THIS UP FOR YOU
STRAIGHT AWAY.

ANYWAY, YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR
THE GRAND OPENING OF OUR NEWEST ATTRACTION...



EDITORIAL

Okay. Being unable to make up my mind as to whether I should write some long rambling personal editorial, thank all the cartoonists who've been involved with *Zero Zero*, or just bow to commercialism and stick a big fat back-issues page in here, I've decided to do all three and embark on an impromptu tour through all 27 issues of *Zero Zero*. I'll try to do it all in one gonzo swoop, going back to edit out only the most appalling mistakes and typos, and so be it. I've also added a few non-issue-specific pieces of cud-chewing, which appear at random intervals. If you think this sounds tedious, it will probably be tedious to you, so don't read this and go read instead all the swell comics. **Avanti! ZERO ZERO #1 (March-April, 1995)**

• Ah, that cover. Two confessions. (1) I asked GARY PANTER for a cover only after Robert Crumb turned me down — but Gary was my second choice. (2) I was expecting one of those patented Panter simple-but-brilliant cartoon line drawings with splashes of watercolor, and what Gary turned in really threw me for a loop — it seemed un-Panterish, somehow, in its layered complexity. I was a little disappointed, even, until my art director DALE YARGER told me (nicely) I was out of my mind and it was a great cover. And so, looking back at five years later, it is. It's a fucking awesome cover. I asked J.R. WILLIAMS to do a piece for the first issue because the title "Zero Zero" was sort of derived from a working title he had for the comic that eventually turned into *Crap*, "Double Zero." (I miss *Skinboy* — I understand J.R. might be working up some new "Skinboy" stories for Dark Horse, though — keep your fingers crossed.) "Fuzz and Pluck's" presence here is due to DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI's insistence that I give TED STEARN a call — I hadn't been blown away by Stearn's work in Mazzucchelli's *Rubber Blanket* and was resistant at first, but as soon as I got the first "Fuzz and Pluck" chapter from Ted I realized I'd been an idiot. A belated thank you to Dave for pushing me in the right direction. I was always hoping to get a goodly amount of comics from the old underground generation in *Zero Zero*, and was thus delighted to get FOOLBERT STURGEON in this issue, and also delighted by the fact that I was able to talk him into doing hand-lettering again, which I think often makes all the difference. HENRIETTE VALIUM is awesome and we'll discuss him further on down. MAX ANDERSSON, as it turned out, was the perfect *Zero Zero* contributor — he'd achieved some sort of alternative success with the publication of the graphic novel *Play*, he had a bunch of stories accumulated (created for the Swedish and German markets) from which I could pick and choose, and his sensibility was exactly what I was looking for. I still can't figure out why DAVID HOLZMAN's "The Man With the Big Head" (which CHRIS WARE recommended to me) didn't create a huge sensation. It sank into the public conscience like a pebble into chocolate pudding, never to be remarked upon. Faced with this indifference, I found myself wondering, not for the last time, *What's wrong with people?* *Zero Zero* readers were certainly paying attention to MIKE DIANA, however, as evidenced by all the complaints I heard. Yes, for the record, I like Diana's work just fine, and while I realize this is a minority opinion, it's an honestly held one. I never published his work just because he was a poster boy for First-Amendment oppression, but because I liked the stories. Rounding off this issue — boy, what a lot of stuff! — were a great collaboration by CHARLES BUKOWSKI and PAT MORIARTY, a strip by MARY FLEENER (see? I got a woman in there), and a back cover by GLENN HEAD (he got the opening-night gig in deference to the fact that I'd cancelled his and Kaz's *Snake Eyes* anthology and essentially revived it as *Zero Zero*, and this constituted my apology). The centrespread by MICHAEL DOUGAN and KIM DEITCH was there mostly because I figured, hey, what are the odds of getting anything substantial from either of these gentlemen (little did I know?). DAVE COLLIER actually talks about his "hiring" to do the series of four-page reportorial vignettes that appear in the first baker's dozen issues in #26; basically, I had this vague feeling that an anthology needed some sort of text piece to balance it out (I don't know why, but all the previous anthologies did) but I didn't want a text piece per se, so Collier's pieces — illustrated text pieces in comics form, so to speak — fit the bill. I think some were more successful than others — there was a point toward the end of the run where you could sense Dave was sort of reaching — but Collier's sensibility is so unique and the subject matter he chose was so off-kilter that they were pretty much all enjoyable to some degree. **THE "SIGNS OF THE IMPENDING APOCALYPSE" ISSUE** • I figured it would be fun to use the back cover for a consistent theme, and since *Zero Zero* had sort of backed into the apocalyptic/millennial theme, that fit the bill. (The logo, at least on the original ones, was meant to suggest a Jack T. Chick tract.) Ultimately, of course, I was able to slap pretty much anything on here that appealed to me, creating only the most Jerry-rigged "apocalypse" theme (later pieces by DAN CLOWES, KIM DEITCH, JIM BLANCHARD, and KRISTINE KRYTTRE were thus scooped up from previous appearances elsewhere; I wrote some copy to tie them into the theme, and voilà). A side benefit of the "Signs of the Impending Apocalypse" is that during the first nine issues, when I avoided issue numbers (some notion about making *Zero Zero* seeming timeless, although all it did was irritate retailers, collectors, and our mail-order department), the number of the "Sign" reveals the issue number. **ZERO ZERO #2 (May-June, 1995)** • If I'd known it was gonna run for 17 issues, I'm not sure if I'd embraced RICHARD SALA's "The Chuckling Whatsit" quite so eagerly (I already figured the originally planned 12 issues would test readers' patience), but once it was rolling there was no stopping it the

behemoth, and I'm glad we did it — I doubt Sala would have come up with such a huge, rollicking tale if he hadn't had a regular deadline breathing down his neck. (See later notes about serializations.) Like *David Boring* or *Black Hole*, it's one of those stories in which the author takes all the obsessions and quirks he's been nurturing throughout his career and pumps them all into one huge epic. I was utterly jazzed to have an authentic new "Trashman" story in this issue, and even though it was, all things considered, minor Trashman, it was like having a new, minor Lennon/McCartney tune in the issue as far as I was concerned. Just that splash page gave me a thrill. We also started MACK WHITE's "Homunculus" (another case of a cartoonist giving me something 100% different from what I was expecting, which I grow to love). I liked DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI's "Stop the Hair Nude" — a good story about cartooning, which I always enjoy. (Issue roundup: a MATSI? inside front cover — *why isn't he doing comics any more?* — a GLENN HEAD centrespread, a WAYNO back cover, and more COLLIER, STURGEON, and ANDERSSON.) **ZERO ZERO #3 (July, 1995)** • RICK ALTERGOTT! Yessssss! I was hoping to make *Zero Zero* a permanent home for Dookus, but that bastard Peter Bagge came along and gave Rick a better gig in *Hate* (full color, better page rates), and then Gilbert Hernandez leaped into the breach and sucked him over into *Measles* — so "Douché Bag Dugan" is the only Altergott story in *Zero Zero*, but I'm proud to have it. I never could figure out why SKIP WILLIAMSON seemed to be considered the Jack Kamen of the underground comix movement in some quarters — I thought he was perhaps the undergrounds' funniest writer and a great graphic stylist. *What's wrong with people?* I'm not 100% sold on "The Air-Conditioning Man," truth be told, but I figured hey, let's publish it and see what happens. GLENN HEAD is another guy with great chops who just never seems to hit the first rank — I wonder if his little fantasy universe is just too closed off or something. (Issue roundup: a MARK NEWGARDEN inside front cover, plus more SALA, COLLIER, STURGEON, STEARN, a DAVID SANDLIN back cover — I'd hoped to get a few more issues into the run before breaking the "Apocalypse" format, but who am I to quarrel with Sandlin, and he certainly went to town on the logo — and ANDERSSON's silent masterpiece "Lolita's Adventures.") **ZERO ZERO #4 (August, 1995)** • That TIM GEORGARAKIS "MeatBox" cover is fucked up — way too dark. I still feel bad about it, because "MeatBox," as written by KAZ, was one of my favorites in that issue. It was also fun watching GEORGARAKIS's style develop from pseudo-Kaz to echt-Georgarakis, although if we ever do the graphic novel, that and the clashing lettering styles from chapter to chapter will be a problem. JEFF JOHNSON, who seemed to vanish after this *Zero Zero* story — *why isn't he doing comics any more?* — titled his story "No Erect Penises," after one of my earliest editorial edicts. (I don't have anything against erect penises, but unfortunately, all our Canadian and British distributors do, so any erect penis in *Zero Zero* would have cut its already meager sales by 20% — as well as screwing those countries' readers out of a chunk of the series.) And of course this issue starts off that astonishing sequence of two-color AL COLUMBIA stories with "I Was Killing When Killing Wasn't Cool," an eight-page black-and-orange masterpiece that packs more into eight pages than you see in most full comics; this issue always sells out before any other issues at conventions, even when we take extras. All hail Al Columbia! And the third "lost puppy," MARK BEYER, turned in a back cover — this may be the last new piece of comics work from Beyer anywhere. *Why isn't he doing comics any more?* (Issue roundup: ANDERSSON, SALA, COLLIER, CAROL TYLER with a cute one-pager, and STEARN with a wild-ass "Dream" story — please note, Stearn collectors, if you've got the *Fuzz and Pluck* book you still need to get these "Dream" stories to keep your collection complete.) **ZERO ZERO #5 (September-October, 1995)** • What a great JOE COLEMAN cover. Too bad that at that size a lot of the text is almost impossible to read. Sorry, Joe, I should've figured out a way around that. CHRIS WARE leaps into the *Zero Zero* fray with "Moon Risk 7," which I don't think has appeared anywhere else (collectors note); leave it to Chris, when turning in a two-color story, to ask for "black and gray." This issue also includes five one-page "Quickie Classics" from KIM DEITCH (I figured, hey, this is about as much as I'm going to get from a genius like Deitch — little did I know), the 11-page "Curse of the Cuddly Critters Factory" (the definitive ANDERSSON Car-Boy story, I think) — plus more COLLIER, the second KAZ/GEORGARAKIS "MeatBox," SALA, WHITE, and a JUSTIN GREEN back cover that didn't really fit what I wanted but hell, it was — *why isn't he doing comics any more?* — Justin Green. **ZERO ZERO #6 (November-December, 1995)** • Turns out KIM DEITCH was working on a 43-page graphic novelette. Worried about "serial fatigue" I decided to run it in three quick big chapters, beginning with a 16-page chunk. (The anti-serialists still grouched.) In retrospect I'm not wild about the BOB FISHERMAN/TH. METZGER story, but it sure is nicely drawn. (Also in this issue, an inside front cover by SKIP WILLIAMSON, a story by PENNY VAN HORN, chapters by SALA and STEARN, a COLLIER piece, a GLENN HEAD centrespread, and a back cover by RICK ALTERGOTT in which Rick, typically, totally ignored format requirements and then produced something so gorgeous I had to use it anyway. Damn you to hell, Rick!) **ZERO ZERO #7 (January-February, 1996)** • And so it turns out that BILL GRIFFITH has got this fantastic 18-page story sitting

(CONTINUED ON P. 31, RIGHT BEFORE THE CHRIS WARE CENTERSPREAD)

TREASURE HUNT by Johnny R.

TONIGHT'S WINNING MEGABALL
NUMBERS ARE...

7....

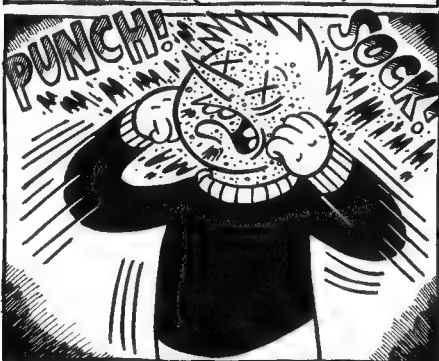
17....

27....

37....

47....

SHIT!
SHIT!
SHIT!
SHIT!
SHIT!!



WHEN I GET MAD AT MYSELF
I PUNCH MYSELF IN THE FACE
REALLY HARD AND SLASH MY ARMS
UP AND SHIT....

WHY'RE
YOU SO
MAD AT
YOURSELF?

CUZ I WASTED MY LAST DOLLAR
ON A BUM LOTTERY TICKET AND
NOW I'M FLAT BUSTED!

WE'LL PREPARE
TO BE CHEERED
UP! CUZ
I'VE
GOT SOME
GOOD
NEWS!

I WHO'S
ZOO

REMEMBER THAT CARPET-BAGGER
THAT WANDERED INTO TOWN LAST
WEEK? WELL, HE JUST LET ME
STEAL THIS TREASURE MAP FROM
HIM FOR \$800!

TREASURE
MAP?

YEAH! IT'S A MAP
WHICH LEADS RIGHT
TO THE TREASURE OF

CRACKBEARD
THE PIRATE!
LOOK!

THE TREASURE PROBABLY CONSISTS
OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF GOLD
AND JEWELS! TOMORROW MORNING
I'M GONNA SET SAIL TO FIND THE
TREASURE! SO YOU WANNA COME
WITH?

SURE!

THE NEXT DAY....

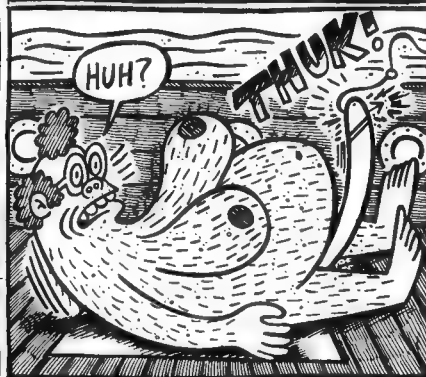
AHOY LOADY!
OVER HERE!

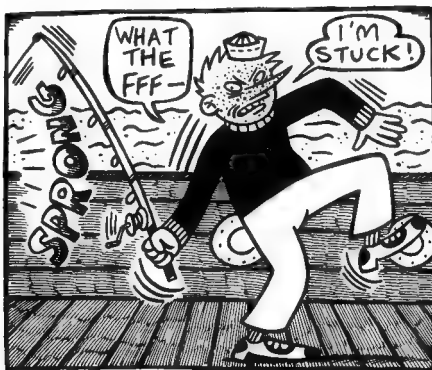
SS. JANUSFACE











AS PUNISHMENT, I SENTENCE YOU TO WEAR FAT PIGGIM'S SEVERED MEMBER AROUND YOUR NECK UNTIL I SAY OTHERWISE!

HUH? IS THAT ALL? SHEESH! THATAIN'T SO BAD....

I THOUGHT HE WAS REALLY GOING TO GIVE ME THE BUSINESS! BUT I GOT OFF PRETTY EASY!

COME TO MY CABIN AND I'LL RUB SOME HEALING HERBS INTO YOUR BLOODY STUMP....

HHMM... THOSE CLOUDS UP AHEAD LOOK PRETTY OMINOUS!

OH WELL, WHAT CAN YOU DO! MIGHT AS WELL CATCH UP ON SOME READING!

A LITTLE LATER ON....

ZZZZ--SNORT--WHUZZAT?

WOW! WHATTA STORM!

KRAK!

SUDDENLY...

HE'S DEAD!



HE JUST KEPT BLEEDING
AND BLEEDING AND THEN HE
DIED IN MY ARMS! WHY GOD?
WHY?



AND YOU KILLED
HIM! MURDERER!



HIS DYING WORDS WERE, "PLEASE
AVENGE MY DEATH AND KILL
THAT ASSHOLE ZITFACE! KILL HIM
TO DEATH!"



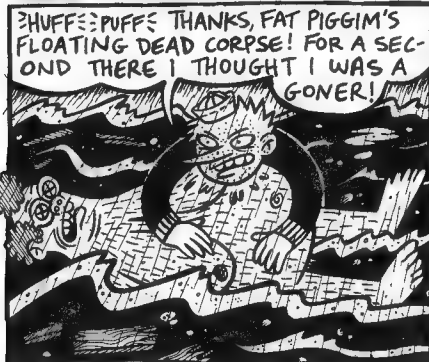
NOW JUST
HOLD THE
PHONE THERE,
SINUS!
CAN'T
WE
JUST SIT
DOWN
OVER

A NICE RELAX-
ING BONG AND
TALK ABOUT
THIS LIKE
A MEL-
LOW DUDES?



JUST THEN....





A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER...

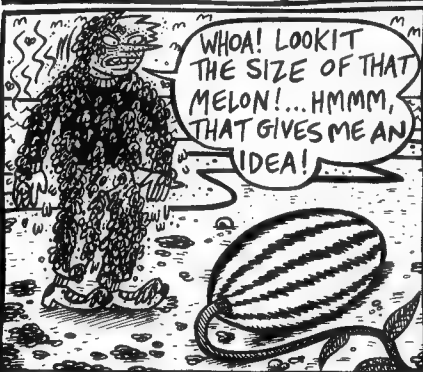
GUH!— WHA?



YEESH! WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED? I'M COVERED IN BIRD SHIT!



FAT PIGGIM'S ROTTING CORPSE MUST'VE ATTRACTED EVERY BIRD FROM MILES AROUND.... P.U. WHATTA STENCH!



WHOA! LOOKIT THE SIZE OF THAT MELON!... HMMM, THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA!

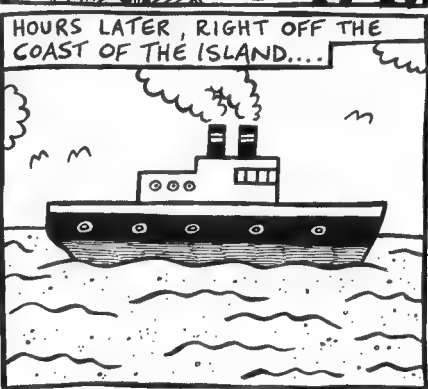
BLEECH! I GOTTA GET OUTTA THESE FUCKIN' SHITTY CLOTHES!



AHH! THAT'S BETTER!









around, which he just needs to complete — do I want it? Hell yes! The only problem is, it's so huge it kind of forces everything else out of the issue except for the SALA and DEITCH serials; well, I'll talk COLLIER into doing the back cover instead of his four-page story and it'll fit, and short-shorts by GILBERT HERNANDEZ and ARCHER PREWITT will round it off — as well as the wonderfully malevolent ANDERSSON story, "Good Claus, Bad Claus." As I recall, we even released this before Christmas, a first for Fantagraphics, whose Christmas issues tend to end in February **THE FOREIGNERS ISSUE** • I love European comics. But when I was putting together *Zero Zero* it struck me that anthologies by their very nature tend to be scattered in terms of content and style, and looking at back issues of RAW and Fantagraphics' own failed anthologies I realized that mixing in European work contributed to this "scattershot" effect (although it worked well for RAW, admittedly). So I handed down the decree: "No foreigners." As it turned out, I figured I could use MAX ANDERSSON because his style and sensibility owe so much more to North American comics than European ones, and I eventually (once I realized *Zero Zero* was fucked anyway) broke down and started throwing in European cartoonists just for the hell of it, but there you have the reason for *Zero Zero*'s xenophobia. **ZERO ZERO #8 (March-April, 1996)** • Continuing our glorious tradition of fucking up the printing on our covers, this issue features a CHARLES BURNS piece that bears scant resemblance, in terms of color balance, to his original. Sorry, Charlie. Particularly since this issue is a megaton-whopper that includes, in addition to the by-now traditional SALA/DEITCH/WHITE chapters, a spectacular full-color inside front cover by AL COLUMBIA, a sublime two-color (greenish blue and black) SofBoy story by ARCHER PREWITT, a full-color Car-Boy story by ANDERSSON, plus DIANA, COLLIER, MORIARTY, VALIUM, and another "Dream Story" by STEARN... **ZERO ZERO #9 (May-June, 1996)** • Snappy Sammy Smoot! Snappy Sammy Smoot! SKIP WILLIAMSON returns with a tremendous cover and new Smoot story! No one cared. *Why's that wrong with you people?* As if that wasn't enough, this issue introduced (I think) American readers to the wonder that is BLANQUET, with the nine-page "Thing That They Call Death." This issue also has the first *Zero Zero* appearance by SAM HENDERSON on the inside front cover (with a bad pun that I shamelessly stole for a later translation job, I must confess), a great VALIUM back cover, plus more SALA, STEARN, and COLLIER — plus the first of three stories by SUSAN CATHERINE and OSCAR ZARATE, which didn't quite seem to fit in *Zero Zero* but which I published because they were so fucking gorgeous I couldn't resist. **ZERO ZERO #10 (July, 1996)** • I think this DREW FRIEDMAN cover — *why isn't he doing comics any more?* — was from some rejected illustration job, and for some reason, as soon as I saw those ageing hippies shaking their sagging booties, the words "Rolling Stone" burned themselves into my brain; art director MARC ARSENAULT picked up the baton and ran with it, and with the help of JIM BLANCHARD — *why isn't he doing comics any more?* — who created the mock-RS logo, we crafted a jeering thumb in the eye to Jann Wenner that won a nice design award. Inside we got a SAM HENDERSON "Monroe Simmons Adventure," plus DAVID HOLZMAN's "Daphne Returned" (just as little response as to the first issue's "Big Head"), a nice SKIP WILLIAMSON "Jesus" back cover, some HENRIETTE VALIUM one-pagers, another JEFF JOHNSON strip, and a cool ALEKSANDAR ZOGRAPF strip — it didn't seem to quite fit, but I published it anyway. What the hell. At this point I figured, perhaps erroneously, that *Zero Zero* had established enough of an identity that I could afford to go against the grain once in a while. **ZERO ZERO #11 (August, 1996)** • So DAVE COOPER's got this great serial, "Crumple," and I say to myself, what the hell, "The Chuckling Whatsit" should be over in one or two issues, let's just start it. Little did I know that it had unintentionally set up the patient reader for a year-long period of two major serials. As it happens, "Crumple" was a brilliantly loathsome graphic novel, a work that explores misogyny from the inside out. This is where I'm grateful that *Zero Zero* has such a low profile, because this was definitely a red flag waved in the face of any feminist who wanted to take it the wrong way. (Dave will have another chance at it, now that the serial is being released as a graphic novel, and his well-deserved *Weasel*-spawned celebrity has made him that much more visible.) Also in this issue, more SALA (of course), plus ANDERSSON, COLLIER, the only KAZ-drawn strip we ever got to run, a ROY TOMPKINS back cover, and "Stubs," what I can only describe as a pretty minor DAVID MAZZUCHELLI effort, but fun nonetheless. **THE SERIALIZATION ISSUE** • Speaking of that... one of the most stubborn and intractable problems in modern alternative comics is, how do you publish longer works? In an ideal world, one would wait until the cartoonist has finished and then release it as a graphic novel, but we don't live in an ideal world, and certain factors militate against it. First, few cartoonists can afford to work on something with no revenue, and the publisher usually can't afford to pay the cartoonist for something that will only be released down the line. But there are also psychological factors at work: So many cartoonists are congenitally dependent on deadlines that the idea of one huge deadline just doesn't work. I firmly believe RICHARD SALA was able to crank out the 200 pages of "Chuckling Whatsit" only because he had bite-size chunks with definable deadlines. (DAVE COOPER, who considered going straight to graphic novels at one point, and produced *Suckle* that way, realized to his chagrin that he in fact *needed* that regular adrenaline burst of finishing an issue, otherwise he wouldn't produce anything.) Thus: serialization. In retrospect, we probably would have been better off serial-

izing "Chuckling Whatsit" in longer, less frequent bursts rather than the 17 mini-chapters (myself when we got to "Smilin' Ed"), but with *Zero Zero* bi-monthly, would it have made sense to run a 25-page chapter every two or three issues instead? Ah well, the final result is what counts, I guess... **ZERO ZERO #12 (September-October 1996)** • Yeah! For years I'd been waiting for MAX ANDERSSON's follow-up to the novel-length *Play*, and the graphic novel "Death and Candy," while only 15 pages, was so dense (10-12 panels per page) that it proved a worthy success. Also in this issue, more SALA and COOPER and COLLIER, an inside front cover by MICHAEL DOUGAN (say, maybe he's got a longer story he wants to tell? Hmm...), an admittedly recycled but still swell DAN CLOWES back cover, and short stories from P. REVESS and the extravagantly gifted Swede JOAKIM PIRI-NEN — another cartoonist whose work I expected a tidal wave of requests for, which never materialized. *What's wrong with people?* **ZERO ZERO #13 (November-December, 1996)** • TED STEARN's "Fuzz and Pluck" get their own cover, and about time, too — at this point I was starting to feel pressure (whether real or imagined) from some regulars to do covers. The timing was particularly good because the "Hallucinations in the Desert" episode (where the heroes try to starve themselves skinny enough to get rid of their collars) is some sort of demented high point both in this serial and in *Zero Zero*. I was also really jazzed by SKIP WILLIAMSON's barbed "Suddenly Things Turned Ugly," a much-needed infusion of political indignation. This was nicely offset by SAM HENDERSON's "Seized ASSETS," five pages of buttocks humor. Back cover by JIM BLANCHARD and MARK RAMONE (yes, that Marky Ramone), a DOUG ALLEN "Idiotland" inside front cover, and the usual COOPER and SALA and WHITE. Special thanks to MARC ARSENAULT for the Stan Lee contents page idea (and its execution). DAVE COLLIER's last regular strip appeared here, and just to spite me he made it one of my favorites — has Dave ever done funny-animals before or since? **ZERO ZERO #14 (January-February, 1997)** • If you're keeping track, this is the exact middle of the run, issue-wise, which is perhaps signified by the fact that every single cartoonist is a repeat. Chapters of COOPER and SALA, nine pages of "Silent Storie's" (sic) by BLANQUET, more DIANA and ZARATE/CATHERINE stories — the only newcomer is TERRY LABAN, whose inside front cover riff on "How to Satisfy a Woman Every Time" doesn't really fit into my stated purpose of stories, stories, stories, but Laban can always make me laugh. The KIM DEITCH back cover is recycled — it's an illustration job that somehow ended up in our files — but it works. **ZERO ZERO #15 (March-April, 1997)** • Chris Oliveros's loss was our gain as JOE SACCO got tired of waiting for an issue of *Drawn & Quarterly* to publish "Christmas With Karadzic," which was after all pretty timely, and gave it to me. Unfortunately, Joe chose this story to experiment with graytones, and our printer chose this issue to lie about how fine a screen they could handle, so the results are a little muddy. The back cover boasts a typically magnificent AL COLUMBIA illustration and a grotesque misspelling of "Walpurgisnacht" caused by the art director's misreading of a proofreading notation I made; it shames me still. Between Joe and the big chunks of SALA and COOPER, the issue got pretty full pretty fast, but I managed to squeeze in short pieces by the reliable locals BRUCE CHRISLIP and DAVE LASKY, plus DAVE COLLIER, P. REVESS, and SAM HENDERSON (the awesome "Girly Stamp Guy"); a pretty good issue, all around... **ZERO ZERO #16 (May, 1997)** • For some reason, we always seem to fuck up the design on KAZ covers (see also the KAZ Fantagraphics catalog cover), I don't know why. I'm not happy with the type. Anyway, this is the second of our three superduper extralength specials, and possibly the best of the lot. The full-color two-page "Jimmy Corrigan" strip (with Jimmy in his "little-kid mad-scientist" mode, and the design that that fuckhead MacFarlane who does *Family Guy* seemed to like so much) was a serial that CHRIS WARE aborted after two installments — aside from its original appearance in *New City*, this constitutes its sole publication. It's primo Ware in his grisly/wacky mode, and, if I recall correctly, is one of the last printed ACME stories to be done with Zip-a-Tone as opposed to computer coloring. Then there's AL COLUMBIA's "Blood Clot Boy" — about which not much needs to be said. God, this guy is good. This issue also features an unusual two-color HENRIETTE VALIUM strip, which Valium submitted to us as black-and-white and which I refused to run because it was virtually illegible. So we put our heads together and, looking back at #11 (where we'd run one of his stories in two colors, which had helped), came up with the idea of coloring it. Valium delivered a color guide, and JEFF JOHNSON nearly lost his sanity coloring it. Valium is a crazy genius, but his work is best experienced in those door-sized silkscreened editions he self-publishes. Thank God DAVE COOPER blew his deadline, or we wouldn't have been able to fit in all the other goodies: a new strip by SKIP WILLIAMSON, "Rabid District Attorney" (certainly one of P. REVESS's finest hours), BLANQUET, MAX ANDERSSON, PENNY VAN HORN's "Mid-Life Crisis" — *why isn't she doing comics any more?* — plus ALEKSANDAR ZOGRAPF, and of course "MeatBox" by KAZ and GEORAKAKIS, and the usual SALA chapter. And hey, note the KRISTINE KRYTTE back cover — by God, if she won't do comics, I'll shanghai an illustration out of her. Still, *why isn't she doing comics any more?* **THE PAGE NUMBER ISSUE** • People have wondered, in print and in person, about the (to them) weird contradiction of *Zero Zero*'s having a contents page with page numbers, but no page numbers on the pages themselves. It's really very simple. I wanted every single mark that appeared on any given page to be from the cartoonist's pen, with no ed-

HTTP://WWW.FINDSMILE.COM

ONE NIGHT I
DREAMT THAT A
STRANGE UFO WROTE
AN ODD CODED
MESSAGE IN THE
SKY!

SEE HERE!
TIME'S A
WASTIN'!

LET'S GET
THIS SHOW
ON THE ROAD!

I THINK
KIM'S DONE
A SPLENDID
JOB DRAWING
MY STORY!

FOR A
COMPLETE IDIOT!
HAW! HAW! HAW!

WHEN I TOLD THE
DREAM TO MY GIRL
FRIEND PAM, SHE
THOUGHT THE
MESSAGE SOUNDED
LIKE A COMPUTER
WEBSITE
CODE!

SHE WAS RIGHT!
A SCRIPT HAS BEEN
COMING IN ON OUR
COMPUTER EVER SINCE,
AT THE RATE OF A
PAGE A DAY,

ALL PURPORTEDLY
WRITTEN BY MY
FICTIONAL CARTOON
CHARACTER, WALDO
THE CAT!

GO
FIGURE!

HEY YOU!

SHUT UP AND DRAW!

WHO'S WRITIN' THIS THING ANYWAY, YOU OR ME!

The Search For Smilin' Ed!

FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, A GROUP OF EXTRATERRESTRIALS HAVE BEEN OBSERVING THE WAYS THAT HUMAN BEINGS ENTERTAIN EACH OTHER.

EPILOGUE

THIS LED TO THE FOUNDING OF A VAST UNDERGROUND ARCHIVE OF HUMAN POPULAR CULTURE THAT HONEYCOMBS THE INTERIOR OF THE PLANET EARTH.

THIS ARCHIVE IS CURATED BY TWELVE MYSTERIOUS PYGMY MEN KNOWN AS THE GREY ONES!

AND NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT. THESE BOYS KNOW HOW TO THROW A PARTY!

AND YA KNOW, DEITCH'S PICTURE OF IT IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS COMIC AIN'T BAD!

HEY, IT'S NOT PERFECT,

BUT HE DOES EFFECTIVELY SHOW THE VERVE OF IT ALL IN HIS OWN QUANTLY PRIMITIVE WAY.

THAT PARTY WAS A BIG WELCOME BASH THAT GOT TOSSED FOR ME WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE.

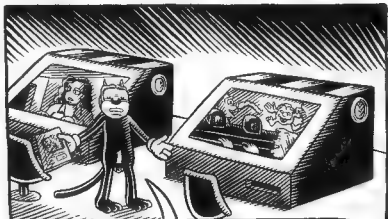


AND MAN OH MAN, DID WE EVER KICK THE GONG AROUND!

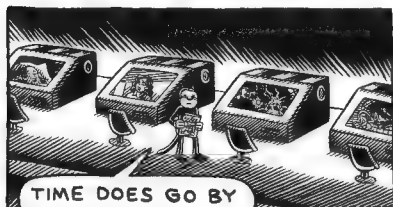
I GUESS IT'S BEEN A COUPLE OF YEARS NOW;



BUT IT SEEMS LIKE JUST THE OTHER DAY TO ME.



THAT'S THE STRANGE THING ABOUT THIS PLACE.

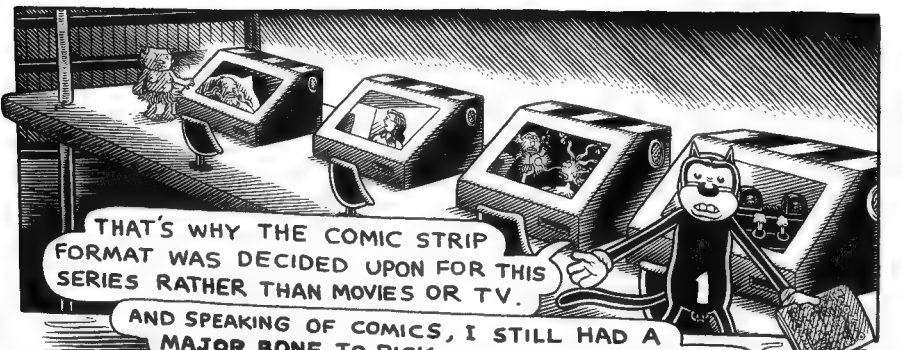


TIME DOES GO BY MIGHTY FAST.



I FOUND THAT OUT LOOKING AT DEITCH'S WEIRD COMICS.

THAN THE HANDS OF A CLOCK.



THAT'S WHY THE COMIC STRIP
FORMAT WAS DECIDED UPON FOR THIS
SERIES RATHER THAN MOVIES OR TV.

AND SPEAKING OF COMICS, I STILL HAD A
MAJOR BONE TO PICK WITH THEM ABOUT THAT!



HELL! I COULD
PUT HIM ONTO
BETTER STORIES
THAN THAT RIGHT
HERE IN THE OLD
NAKED CITY
I BUMP INTO
'EM EVERY
DAY.

TAKE
THAT DAY FOR INSTANCE.

HERE
HE IS
NOW!

WALDO!


HUH!

I MEAN,
CHECK OUT THIS
FIRST ISSUE! THEY GOT ME
TALKIN' IN HERE LIKE
I WROTE THE THING!

DOC ADMITTED THAT PERHAPS
SOME DRAMATIC LICENSE HAD
BEEN TAKEN.

BUT THEN HE SLAPPED A
SET OF HEAD PHONES ON ME
AND SAID,

BUT THIS IS
YOUR VOICE ISN'T IT?



SO WHAT'RE YA
DOIN' WITH YOUR
FACE IN THAT
STORE WINDOW?
HID YOU WAS
COMICS?

AND IT WAS, OF COURSE.

BECAUSE THEN I DID REMEMBER
TELLING CHONORA ALL THAT STUFF ON
OUR WAY TO EAST 36TH STREET!



HELL, I COULD PUT
DEITCH ONTO BETTER
STORIES THAN THAT.

OH YEAH?

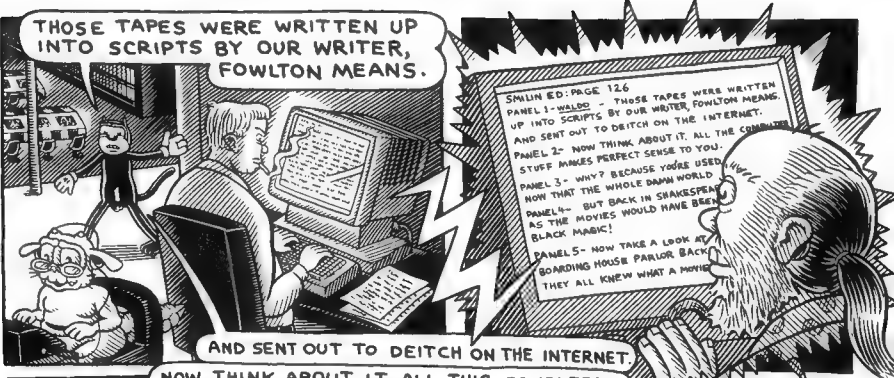


AND COME TO THINK
OF IT, HE WAS
WEARING SOME KIND
OF A WALKMAN!



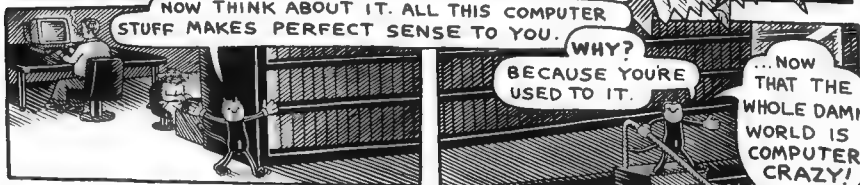
THE LITTLE TWERP WAS WIRED!

THOSE TAPES WERE WRITTEN UP
INTO SCRIPTS BY OUR WRITER,
FOWLTON MEANS.



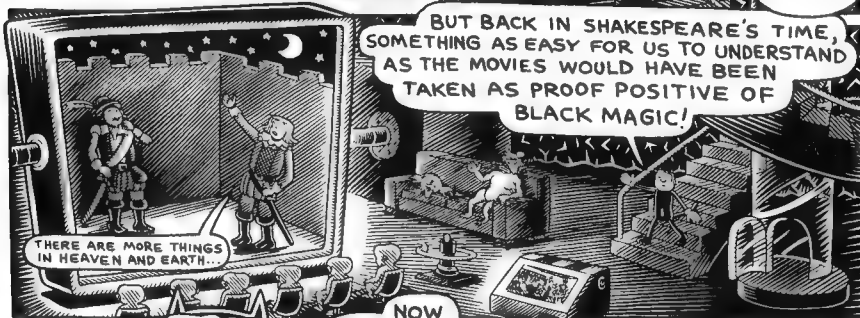
AND SENT OUT TO DEITCH ON THE INTERNET.

NOW THINK ABOUT IT. ALL THIS COMPUTER
STUFF MAKES PERFECT SENSE TO YOU.

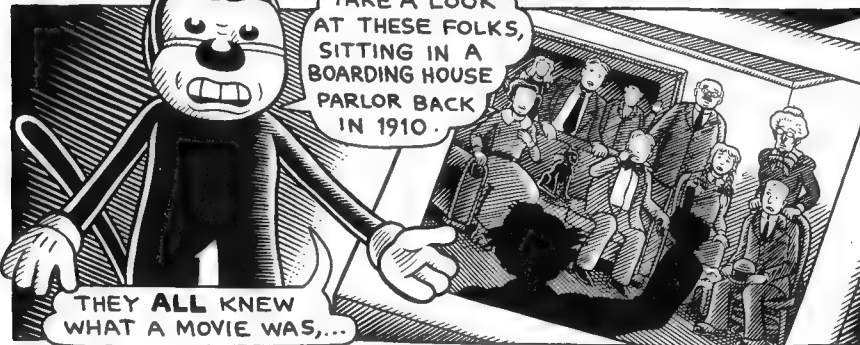


...NOW
THAT THE
WHOLE DAMN
WORLD IS
COMPUTER
CRAZY!

BUT BACK IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME,
SOMETHING AS EASY FOR US TO UNDERSTAND
AS THE MOVIES WOULD HAVE BEEN
TAKEN AS PROOF POSITIVE OF
BLACK MAGIC!



NOW
TAKE A LOOK
AT THESE FOLKS,
SITTING IN A
BOARDING HOUSE
PARLOR BACK
IN 1910.





BUT, IF YOU TOLD THEM THAT EVERYTHING
GOING ON IN THAT ROOM
WAS BEING OBSERVED
BY AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL
BEING,

AND BEAMED TO A
SPACE STATION THIRTY THOUSAND
MILES AWAY,

WHERE IT WOULD BE
RECORDED AND PRESERVED
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
TO ENJOY,

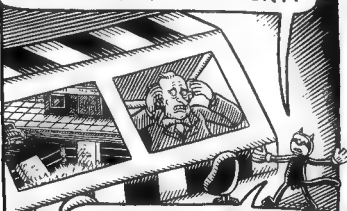
I GUARANTEE YOU THAT
THEY WOULD HAVE FOUND IT KIND
OF HARD
TO SWALLOW.

AND YET
THE PRICELESS PROOF
IS RIGHT HERE IN
THIS ROOM.

BUT
Y'KNOW,
IT'S ALWAYS
BEEN THAT
WAY.

STUFF GETS DISMISSED AS JUST
A BUNCH OF SUPERNATURAL MUMBO JUMBO. THEN LATER
IT TURNS OUT TO BE THE SCIENCE WE HADN'T FOUND OUT ABOUT YET.

NOW WE'RE ON THE THRESHOLD
OF A BRAND NEW CENTURY.



WHICH MIGHT MAKE THIS A
GOOD TIME TO LOOK AT SOME COOL
STUFF FROM THE LAST ONE THAT
ALMOST GOT LOST IN THE SHUFFLE.



LIKE
FOR INSTANCE
THIS GUY,
PAUL K. DINTENFASS.

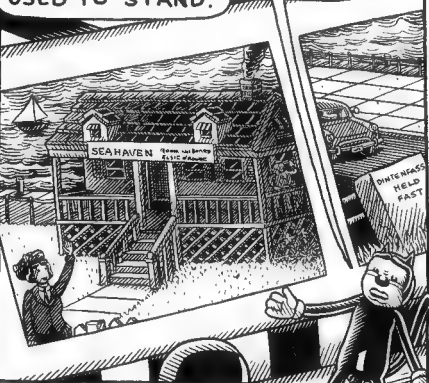


TODAY THIS STONE,
IN A STATEN ISLAND
CEMETERY, IS ALL THAT'S LEFT
TO REMIND THE WORLD
THAT HE EVER EVEN EXISTED.

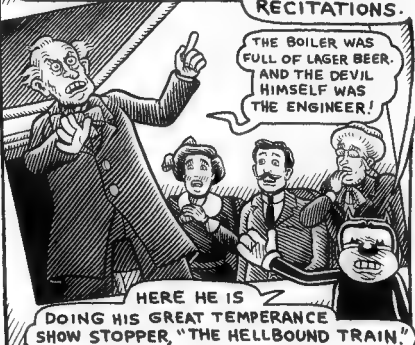
AND YET PAUL K. DINTENFASS WAS AN ACTOR EXTRAORDINAIRE! HIS STAGE WAS
RIGHT OVER THERE WHERE THAT MALL IS NOW.



THAT'S WHERE MOTHER O'ROURKE'S
SEAHAVEN BOARDING HOUSE
USED TO STAND.



FROM 1862 TO 1910, DINTENFASS
HELD FORTH THERE WHERE HE WAS
SOMETHING OF A LOCAL CELEBRITY
FOR HIS GREAT TALENT AT PARLOR
RECITATIONS.



THE BOILER WAS
FULL OF LAGER BEER.
AND THE DEVIL
HIMSELF WAS
THE ENGINEER!

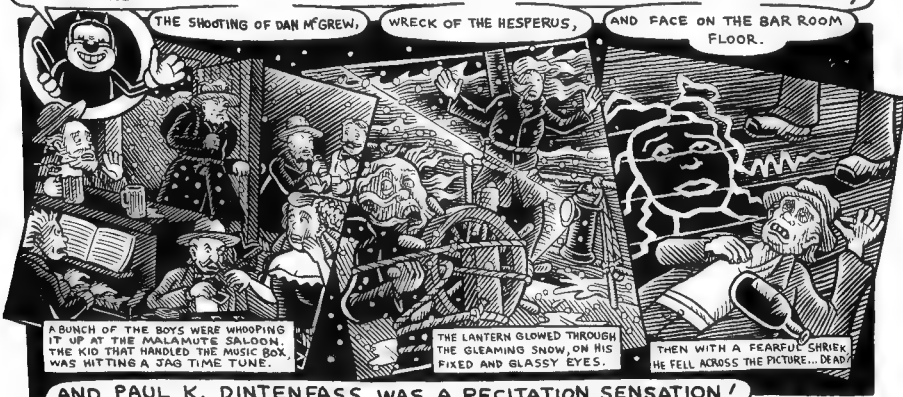
HERE HE IS
DOING HIS GREAT TEMPERANCE
SHOW STOPPER, "THE HELLBOUND TRAIN."

RECITATIONS WERE POPULAR POEMS THAT TOLD A STORY. TYPICAL TITLES WERE,

THE SHOOTING OF DAN MCGREW,

WRECK OF THE HESPERUS,

AND FACE ON THE BAR ROOM FLOOR.



AND PAUL K. DINTENFASS WAS A RECITATION SENSATION!



AND DREAMT THAT HE RODE ON A HELLBOUND TRAIN!



BUT THIS GREAT TALENT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LOST FOREVER, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR CAPTAIN BARNABASS CAMPBELL.

ONE DARK AND STORMY NIGHT, CAMPBELL, THEN A YOUNG SEAMAN, WAS SHIPWRECKED AND CAME INTO CONTACT WITH ONE OF THE STRANGE, SEEMINGLY INANIMATE, EXTRATERRESTRIALS!



HE WORE IT AS A LUCKY CHARM FOR THE REMAINING 62 YEARS OF HIS LIFE.

BESIDES THE LOOK THIS GIVES US OF DINTENFASS, CAMPBELL'S EXPLOITS WITH VARIOUS 19TH CENTURY PROSTITUTES

ARE CONSIDERED SCORCHING COMEDY CLASSICS DOWN HERE!

BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY.

MORE TO THE POINT, CAMPBELL'S VISITS TO SEAHAVEN, OVER THE YEARS, GIVES US PRICELESS GLIMPSES OF THAT PAUL K. DINTENFASS MAGIC.

DINTENFASS WAS SO GOOD, HE STAYED AT SEAHAVEN, RENT FREE, FOR 48 YEARS!

HE HAD MANY THEATRICAL OFFERS, BUT HIS GIFT SEEMED ONLY TO WORK WITH MORE INTIMATE AUDIENCES.

AND BARS WERE OUT. ONE DRINK AND ALL HIS VAST REPERTOIRE FLEW RIGHT OUT OF HIS HEAD!

HE LIKED TO CLOSE A SHOW WITH THE DEATH SPEECH FROM OTHELLO. HIS FANS LOVED IT.

I KISSED THEE, ERE I KILLED THEE!

BUT IT ALWAYS LEFT HIM BADLY DRAINED. FOR YEARS HIS DOCTOR HAD URGED HIM TO CUT IT FROM HIS REPERTOIRE.

BUT THIS, HE WOULD NOT INDEED, COULD NOT DO.

ON OCTOBER 13, 1910, HE RECITED THE OTHELLO SPEECH ONE LAST TIME. HE WAS NEVER BETTER.



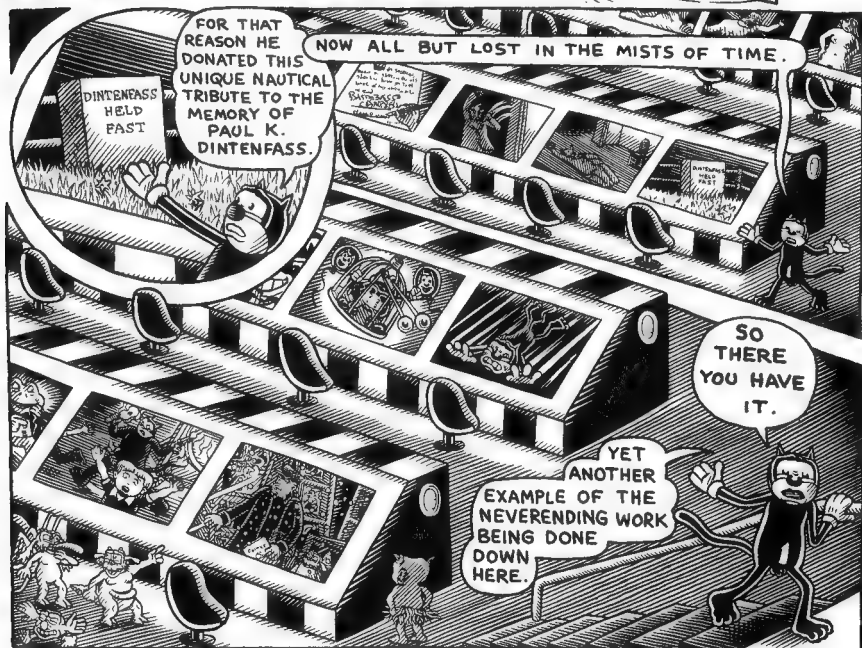
OUT OF THE HUSH THAT FOLLOWED, IT SOON BECAME PAINFULLY CLEAR THAT DINTENFASS HAD BREATHED HIS LAST.



NO ONE WAS MORE DEEPLY MOVED THAN CAPTAIN CAMPBELL.

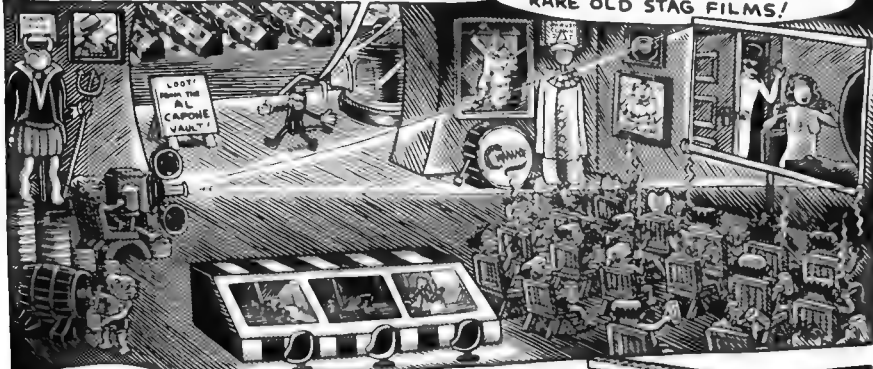


THERE HAD NEVER BEEN A TIME THAT CAPTAIN CAMPBELL HADN'T SIGNED A TEMPERANCE PLEDGE AFTER HEARING DINTENFASS RECITE THE HELLBOUND TRAIN!



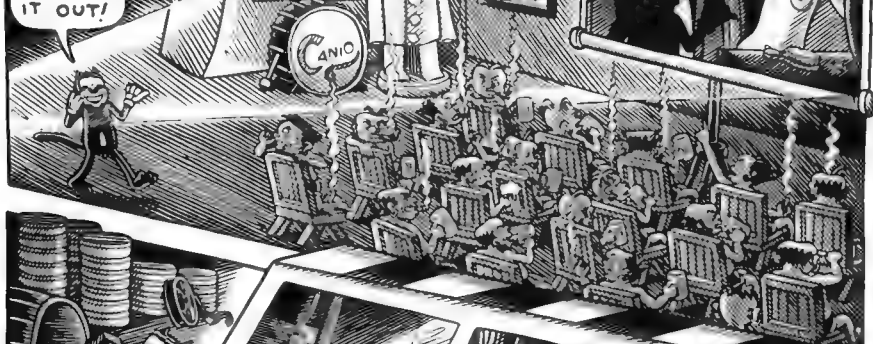
NOW ACROSS THE HALL HERE IS A FAIRLY RECENT ACQUISITION; THE AL CAPONE COLLECTION,

RICH IN OPERA MEMORABILIA AND RARE OLD STAG FILMS!



THE BIG PRIZE OF THIS HAUL IS A LEGENDARY, LONG LOST STAG REEL FEATURING JOAN CRAWFORD!

CHECK IT OUT!



ALL THIS STUFF WAS REMOVED FROM AL CAPONE'S SECRET VAULT IN 1988,

... JUST MOMENTS BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF GERALDO RIVERA AND A LIVE TV CREW!

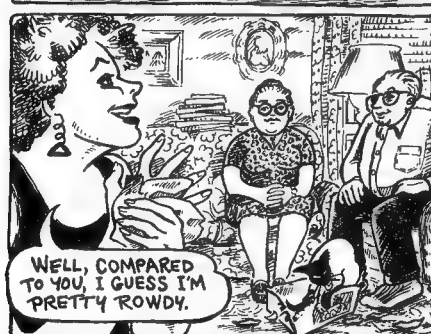
AH BUT THAT TOO, IS ANOTHER STORY.

Kim Bitch

THE END

CHING—MOST RECENT IN A SERIES OF NUTSO
SIAMESE BELOVED BY MY PARENTS.







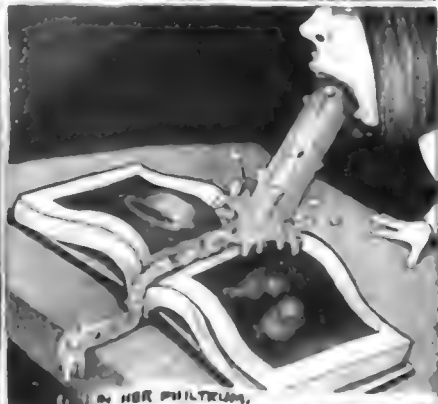
NADINE HAD A WAAT



UNDER HER NOSE



ABOVE HER MOUTH



IN HER PHILTRUM.



THAT'S ALL I REMEMBER



ABOUT NADINE.

The monster under the bed

David B.

Dreamed on 12 Sept. '94

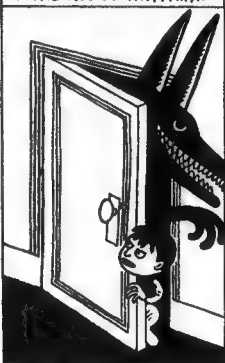
I am a child. At night, a monster crawls out from under the bed.



I'm not afraid of him. I tame him.
He's my friend.



That night, I sneak out
of the house with him.



The bed tries to alert my
family.



I have to kill it!



We go out to the garden...



The garden has been invaded by all my favorite characters...

The battle freezes...



... and becomes a landscape.



The monster charges over precipices, abysses, mountains.



We find ourselves at the door to the garden but I don't walk through it.



I scale the wall.



The monster begs me for help getting up the wall.



I pull him to me. He's heavy.



It's as if I'm lifting the entire garden. He rips open.



As he is torn apart, the monster screams.



I topple off the other side of the wall, with one of the monster's severed hands in mine.



In my hand I've got a little black ball. I've saved the monster's soul.



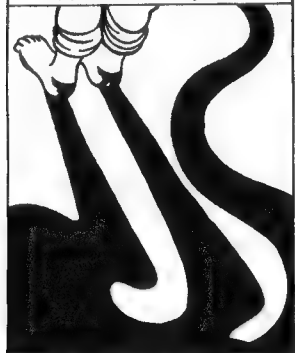
I stretch out the ball. I mold it back into the shape of the monster.



Then I cut open my heels with a rock.



I attach the monster to the wounds in my heels.



And I begin down the road that opens itself to me.



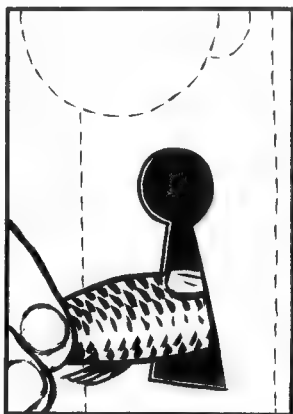
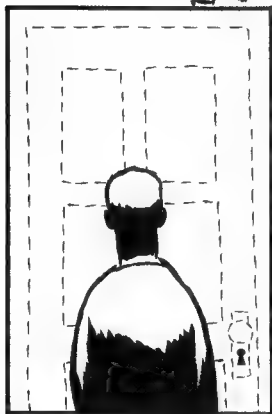
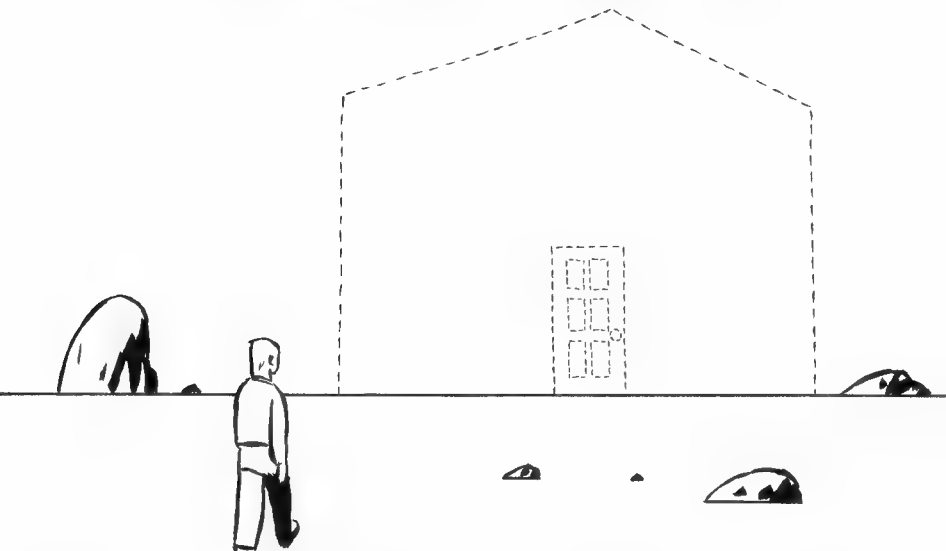
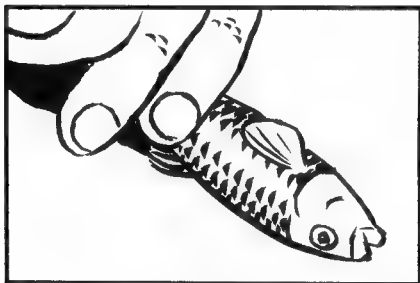
STILL LIFE

by DAVID MAZZUCHELLI



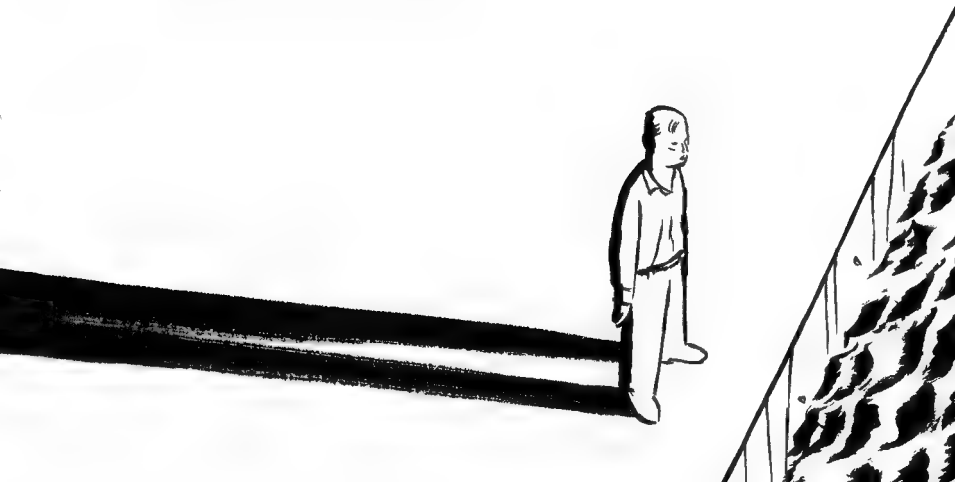
The wind off the water
is salty, like
memory.

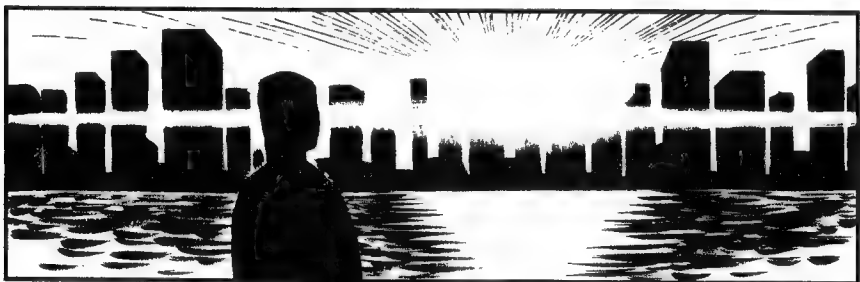
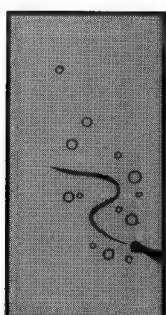
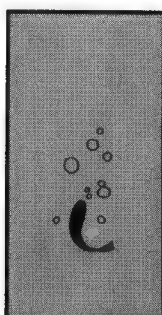
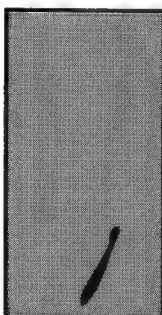
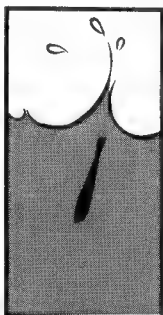












And the setting sun
kisses my eyes.



END

HOMVNCVLVS: THE DREAM

BY MACK WHITE



I DREAMED I WAS NORMAL SIZED, AND ON A LONG JOURNEY BY FOOT. I STOPPED TO REST...



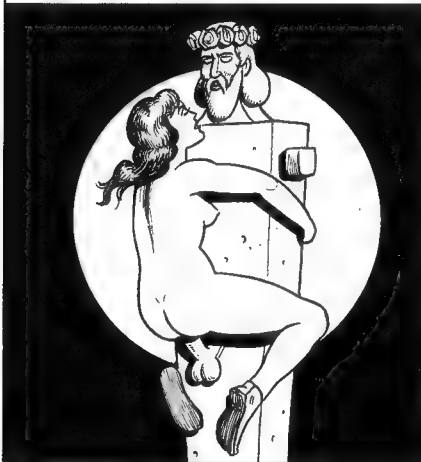
I WAS ROUSED FROM MY SLUMBER BY THE SOUND OF MUSIC ON A NEARBY HILL. A WOMAN'S VOICE WAS SINGING IN PRAISE OF DIONYSOS...



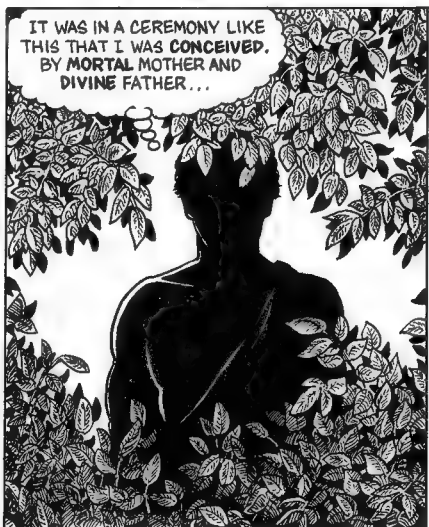
I FOLLOWED THE WOMEN INTO A SACRED GROVE WHERE STOOD A HERM OF DIONYSOS...



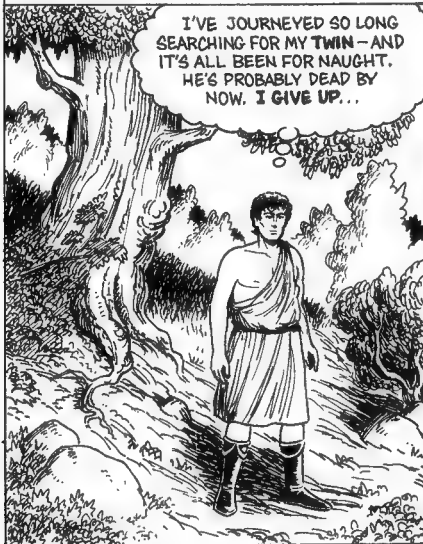
ONE BY ONE, THE WOMEN UNDRESSED AND MOUNTED THE HERM...



IT WAS IN A CEREMONY LIKE THIS THAT I WAS CONCEIVED, BY MORTAL MOTHER AND DIVINE FATHER...



I LEFT THE WOMEN TO THEIR REVELRY. PERHAPS, I MUSED, ONE OF THEM WILL CONCEIVE ANOTHER DEMIGOD, THIS SET ME THINKING ABOUT MY LOST DIVINITY...



I'VE JOURNEYED SO LONG SEARCHING FOR MY TWIN - AND IT'S ALL BEEN FOR NAUGHT. HE'S PROBABLY DEAD BY NOW. I GIVE UP...

...IT'S JUST AS WELL. I'VE LEARNED TO LIVE WITHOUT MY DIVINE POWERS. THEY WERE A BURDEN TO ME ANYWAY. HAD I NOT BEEN A DEMIGOD I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED IN THE FIRST PLACE. SO I GIVE UP THE QUEST...



I WALKED A LITTLE FURTHER, THEN STOPPED BY A STREAM TO COOL MY FEET. SUDDENLY I HEARD A TINY VOICE...



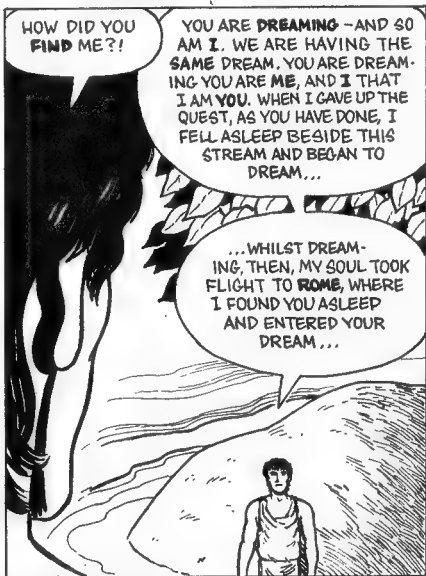
HOMUNCULUS!

MY TWIN!

HOW DID YOU FIND ME?!

YOU ARE DREAMING - AND SO AM I. WE ARE HAVING THE SAME DREAM. YOU ARE DREAMING YOU ARE ME, AND I THAT I AM YOU. WHEN I GAVE UP THE QUEST, AS YOU HAVE DONE, I FELL ASLEEP BESIDE THIS STREAM AND BEGAN TO DREAM...

...WHILST DREAMING, THEN, MY SOUL TOOK FLIGHT TO ROME, WHERE I FOUND YOU ASLEEP AND ENTERED YOUR DREAM...



AS HE SPOKE, I HAD THE GROWING REALIZATION THAT NOT TILL NOW HAD MY TWIN AND I BEEN **ONE**. WE HAD DIVERGED INTO SEPARATE BEINGS, THEN TRULY FOUND EACH OTHER. THE MYSTERY OF OUR WHOLENESS LAY IN OUR **DUALITY**, I REALIZED—AND OUR **DIVINITY** IN THE MATERNAL, AND **MORTAL**, ASPECT OF OUR BEING. AND SO, WHEN WE CEASED TO STRIVE FOR IT, AND EMBRACED DEATH, THE ETERNAL FELL WITHIN OUR GRASP. IN MANHOOD LAY OUR GODHOOD—IN THE **TWO** WAS THE **ONE**. REALIZING THIS, I FELT THE NAILS DRIVE THROUGH MY FLESH AND KNEW THAT I WAS **DYING** IN THE MIDDLE OF A DREAM . . .





... AND THEN I AWOKE IN MY FRIEND THE EUNUCH'S HOUSE — ALIVE AND NORMAL SIZED. I SENSED I NO LONGER HAD A TWIN. INSTEAD OF BEING TWO, I NOW WAS ONE. AND ONE I HAVE REMAINED THESE MANY YEARS, AND GROWN OLD, A MORTAL MAN, HAPPY TO RELINQUISH MY GODHOOD...



AND YET I KNOW THIS TOO IS A DREAM, AND SOMEDAY SOON I WILL REALLY DIE. THIS, DEAR READER, IS YOUR FATE TOO. HAVE YOU NOT STRUGGLED TO AWAKEN FROM A DREAM, AND ON WAKING, FELT RELIEVED — ONLY TO REALIZE YOU WERE NOT AWAKE AFTER ALL, BUT DREAMING YOU WERE AWAKE? WHEN AT LAST YOU DID AWAKE YOU WERE RELIEVED AGAIN, BUT LATER WONDERED, "IS THIS A DREAM TOO?" THE ANSWER IS YES. YOU ARE DREAMING EVEN NOW. YET SOON YOU WILL AWAKE, AND ALL THE THINGS IN THIS DREAM OF LIFE WILL FADE AWAY, AND YOU WILL BE RELIEVED, AND HAPPY, AND WHOLE, AND WHERE THERE WERE MANY, THERE WILL BE ONE...

THE END

torial intrusion whatsoever, and a page number is, to me, a graphic intrusion. However, I've leaped through enough back issues of *Weirdo* to know how frustrating it can be to rummage through one's old contents page-less anthologies. In fact, the *Zero Zero* contents page are not useless, even without page numbers on the pages: They tell you more or less where each story appears, what precedes and what follows it, and if the contents page tells you that the story you're looking for appears after the Kim Deitch chapter, it makes it that much easier for you to leaf through the issue and find it. **ZERO ZERO #17 (June, 1997)** • Turns out MICHAEL DOUGAN has this unpublished 14-page story; unfortunately, it's autobiographical, and hadn't made a big point out of "no autobiography" (except for Collier's special journalistic dispensation?) Yeah, but, on the other hand, a new 14-page Dougan story? What the hell. "Double-Booked" is a great addition to the limited genre of "cartoonists cartooning about cartooning" — say, wouldn't that make a nice theme collection? With COOPER and SALA tying up much of the remainder of the issue, I squeezed in a two-color "Silent Story" by BLANQUET, a short MAX ANDERSSON, RENEE FRENCH's "Duck," a "Bad Boys" story by J.R. WILLIAMS (rescued from the never-finished final issue of *Crap*), more "Fuzz and Pluck" by STEARN. What the hell, as long as I'm violating my rules against autobio, I might as well relax my rules against graphic experimentation vs. stories, hence a back cover by ETHAN PERSOFF, who would later go on to great controversy as the creator of *Top Notch*. I liked his work, and like it still. **ZERO ZERO #18 (July, 1997)** • The issue that made it onto network TV, in the hands of Conan O'Brien sidekick and future movie superstar Andy Richter. (Watch for him in the *Ghost World* movie.) Flattered as cover artist SAM HENDERSON and I are, we suspect it had more to do with the fact that the graphic and logo are easily readable from either across the room or on TV. And Sam's story about a banana peel is magnificently stupid, of course. Henderson rules. A hideous production error on this issue, which fortunately affects only the contents page — smeared into illegibility by some grotesque computer glitch. DERF, best known for his "The City" weekly strip, surprised me with a full-fledged eight-page story, "Young Jeffrey Dahmer." He should do more of those. Also, another "Funny Bunny" by ARCHER PREWITT, more COOPER and WHITE, a spectacular full-color piece by WALT HOLCOMBE that I still can't figure out — why isn't he doing comics any more? — a strip by M.L. TEAGUE, and hallelujah, the final chapter of RICHARD SALA's "The Chucking Whatsit!" **ZERO ZERO #19 (August, 1997)** • We get to thank DAVID MAZZUCHELLI again, as it was he who originally published a chapter of FRANCESCA GHERMANDI and MASSIMO SEMERANO's "Palomar on Acid" story, whose original title I forgot but which I dubbed "Pop. 666" in tribute to a fellow Thompson, Jim. Again, I was trying to avoid foreign cartoonists, but this story tickled me, and I thought, perhaps wrongly, that I could beat the text into a more American feel. Goddamn, can that woman draw, though. Didn't get a big response from anyone. *What's wrong with people?* Incidentally, for those wondering why the story stops after the fourth chapter, it was interrupted in its Italian serialization too, and therefore is stuck there until and unless some publisher or consortium of publishers pays them to finish it. Inside front cover by JEFF JOHNSON, back cover by BLANQUET, a 19-page chapter of "Crumple" by DAVID COOPER, plus MAX ANDERSSON and GLENN HEAD. **ZERO ZERO #20 (September-October, 1997)** • Having hit the 20s, I'd pretty much figured *Zero Zero* was a goner, and if it wasn't for a certain the looming "Smilin' Ed" (see next issue) would probably have axed it there and then. This therefore is something of a treading-water issue, with a very nice GLENN HEAD cover and story, the first appearance of LEWIS TRONDMHEIM in an American magazine (with a full-color "Cosmonaut" — at this point I'd entirely given up on the "Signs of the Apocalypse" and a fantastically beautiful M.L. TEAGUE full-color story. MACK WHITE is there too. But hey, there's "Amnesia," the third of those head-wrenching AL COLUMBIA two-color jobs. This "Pop. 666" episode was originally published in *Rubber Blanket*, by the way, but it was entirely re-translated for its appearance here and those insane collectors who have both issues can do a side-by-side comparison to determine just how widely translations can vary. **ZERO ZERO #21 (November-December, 1997)** • See, after finishing his earlier story, KIM DEITCH had told me in no uncertain terms that he was done with comics, which were too labor-intensive and not remunerative enough, and he was going to do fine-art prints. So you can imagine my surprise and delight when he called up one day and said he was working on a new story. You can imagine my further surprise and delight when he said it would be "about 100 pages." (As it turned out, when he sent me his layouts and I counted them up, it came to over 120 pages — when I told him he was off by at least 20 pages, he seemed untruffed.) Anyway, having put up with a lot of whining about following serials in short chapters, I decided to start off "The Search for Smilin' Ed" with a mammoth 48-page chapter — the most all-new Deitch ever foisted on an unsuspecting public in one gob, beating RAW's previous record (for "Boulevard of Broken Dreams") by a half-dozen pages. Of course, no one seemed to pay much attention to this. *What's wrong with people?* **ZERO ZERO #22 (January-February, 1998)** • MACK WHITE gets his cover! Somehow this is missing something, and I don't know if we fucked up the coloring or it just doesn't work. The SETH "astronauts" inside front cover is picked up from some weekly — I was getting less particular about reprinting stuff at this point, and I just thought this was nice. Aside from that, this issue consists of nothing but "the usual gang of idiots." The only interest-

ing thing I can point out is that the "Fuzz and Pluck" strip by TED STEARN was screwed up somewhere in production (before it got to me, I should add) and that's why the line quality is so miserable. Ted was pretty devastated, but as I told him, we'll fix it in the book version...and we did. **ZERO ZERO #23 (March-April, 1998)** • THE DOUG ALLEN material was inherited from a proposed Allen-edited Kitchen Sink comic on the subject of automobiles. *Tired*. I flirted with the idea of releasing it, but ultimately came to the conclusion that maybe another anthology would be a bad idea, and Doug wasn't sure when he'd be able to put together another one anyway. The JASON LITTLE inside front cover and ETHAN PERSOFF back cover are exactly the kind of formal flucking-around I avoided like the plague during the first couple of years of *Zero Zero*, but I liked both pieces, and hell, *Zero Zero* was in its lame-dude period anyway. Some have noted that behind the funky cover this issue was probably the most disgusting of the entire run, with RENEE FRENCH's hideous "Cornelia" story, BLANQUET's ghastly "Silent Story," MIKE DIANA's appalling "Junk Rabbit" Part One, and HENRIETTE VALIUM's creepy "The Head Reserve." Christ, this issue was gross. No wonder I put the sweet P. REVESS strip, "A Love Set to Music," first. **ZERO ZERO #24 (Summer 1998)** • ...And we continue the "gross-out" sequence with a "Smelly Ass and Fisty" strip by IVAN BRUNETTI, the most grotesque (and to date last — the series was abandoned by the artist at this point) "Pop. 666," more "Junk Rabbit" from MIKE DIANA. The KIM DEITCH "Smilin' Ed" chapter, LEWIS TRONDMHEIM "Cosmo-naut," and ZARATE/CATHERINE story seem a little out of place amidst all this depravity. At least the ARCHER PREWITT "singing rats" cover manages to straddle the two approaches... **ZERO ZERO #25 (Fall 1998)** • What a cover! I'd long wanted to run some T. OTT material, but unfortunately it had all been tied up with Kitchen Sink, and the only way to get something of his was for him to do something new for Fantagraphics — which he did. Fascinatingly, Ott's originals are actually considerably smaller than printed size — the originals to this story arrived in a tiny envelope, like a small stack of post-cards. JOE ROCCO's "Santa Claus" inside front cover was from a blind submission. The JOE SACCO "Stones" strips appeared in a local paper and I just love Joe's stuff to pieces. Aside from that, we've got more WHITE "Homunculus" and DEITCH "Smilin' Ed" — **ZERO ZERO #26 (Special post-antepenultimate issue)** • This would have been the last issue if it hadn't been for the fact that I didn't feel I could leave fans of DEITCH's "Smilin' Ed" and WHITE's "Homunculus" hanging, but in any event, it has a certain quality of everything-and-the-kitchen-sink. In fact, the cover, by Peter Bagge, was *inherited* from Kitchen Sink — it was supposed to be for the ill-fated *Mona #2*. This issue actually came the closest to filling some of my ambitions, by featuring two solid stories by new talents (AARON AUGENBLICK and CHRISTINE SHIELDS) — both of whom promptly bolted from comics, of course — and a "Sign of the Impending Apocalypse" by PETER KUPER (the MIKE DIANA "hammer" inside front cover was a "Sign" that didn't quite work out). "Alfred the Great" finished the tetralogy of AL COLUMBIA two-color jobs (although the second color is hard to see — here and in *Blab*, AL was flirting with a two-color process that cost me as much as any two-color process but was invisible to the reader) — and yes, the fifth page is supposed to run much later in the issue, as a weird sort of postscript. In the spirit of "fuck it, let's try it," I also decided that this would be my last chance to shove the great French cartoonist REISER down everyone's throat (in retrospect, that second color was too pink — sorry about that), and give ETHAN PERSOFF a chance to win back some fans after the *Top Notch* thing. Of course, I heard nothing about the Reiser story. *What's wrong with people?* Oh, and needless to say, I appreciated learning from DAVID COLLIER that I was responsible for breaking up his marriage. **ZERO ZERO #27 (Special Y2K issue)** • I'm grateful that AL COLUMBIA provided the great cover and back cover for this issue. I'm grateful that I was able to finish up both MACK WHITE and KIM DEITCH's serials, and with such a bang, too. (Hey, if you're looking for a big finish, the crucifixion works!) I'm grateful to JOHNNY RYAN for giving us a big long story that he probably could have used for his new *Angry Youth Comic* (coming from Fantagraphics in December). I'm grateful to DAVID B. for letting me reprint one of his stories, and to ERIC REYNOLDS for letting it be a champ. I'm grateful to CHRIS WARE for his centspredded, and I'm grateful to RENEE FRENCH for creeping us one last time. I'm grateful for another color MAX ANDERSSON strip, and I'm grateful for another MAZZUCHELLI strip. I'm really grateful to have had the chance to "preview" the upcoming graphic novel by the great JOYCE FARMER. And I'm grateful, as you should be, that this editorial is over. (All back issues available for \$3.95 postpaid, except for #8, 16, and 26, \$4.95 each) Thanks to all the previous contributors, thanks to the art directors (including Mark Bigelow and Peppy White, who did this final issue), thanks to Quebecor for only screwing up once or twice in the whole series. And here's the indicia, boys and girls: **Zero Zero #27**, Summer, 2000. *Zero Zero* has been put to death by Fantagraphics Books, Inc., and is copyright © 2000 Fantagraphics Books. 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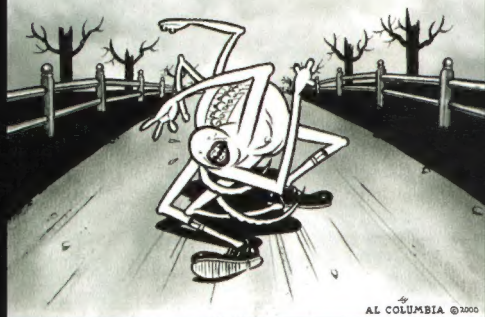
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YES!

VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S

'CHEAPY the GUINEA PIG'

WHEN V. NABOKOV WROTE 'UNRAUGHTER IN THE DARK', HE HAD HIS MIMIC CHARACTER, ALBINUS, COME UP WITH AN IDEA FOR AN ANIMATED CHARACTER, NAMED 'CHEAPY the GUINEA PIG'. NABOKOV DELETED THIS FROM THE NOVEL SHORTLY BEFORE IT WAS PUBLISHED. THE FOLLOWING IS A CARTOON DEVOTED TO NABOKOV'S IDEA, THOUGH INTERPRETED AND INSPIRED BY THE NAME ALONE AND THE MANY ASSES THAT A GUINEA PIG HAS TO OFFER TO THE WORLD OF CARTOONS...

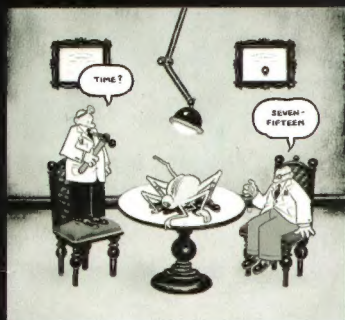


NEARLY UNRECOGNIZABLE AS HUMAN, CHEAPY THE GUINEA PIG HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF COUNTLESS SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS DEVOTED TO GENETIC RE-SEARCH FOR MOST OF HIS UNHAPPY LIFE.



THE GOAL OF TO-DAY'S EXPERIMENT IS TO DETERMINE THE LENGTH OF TIME CHEAPY CAN ENDURE BEING STRUCK REPEATEDLY ABOUT THE HEAD AND FACE WITH A BALL-PEEN HAMMER. BEFORE HE EXPIRES...

OF COURSE, ALL EXPERIMENTS ARE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL WHILE IN PROGRESS...



AND SO, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT APPEARS AS THOUGH CHEAPY THE GUINEA PIG COULD NOT ENDURE BEING STRUCK ABOUT THE HEAD AND FACE WITH A BALL-PEEN HAMMER FOR A VERY LONG TIME AT ALL!

